CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

CONCORDIA BENEFITS COMMITTEE

Meeting of Wednesday
January 14, 1976

Attendance: Mr J. Tait, Chairman; Mr E.A. Lemieux, Vice Chairman; Mr H. Hemens; Mr A. Duff; Mr F. Villemaire; Prof. J.C. Turgeon; Prof. A. Dickie; Prof. B. Barbieri; Mr R. Martin; Dr J. Smola; Prof. G. Martin; Mr C. Waters; Messrs C. Beadle and R. Laberge of William M. Mercer Ltd

Minutes of the December 16, 1975 Meeting

Professor Dickie asked that a motion to adopt the minutes be postponed until he had an opportunity to propose some changes. The postponement was agreed to by the Committee.

Progress report on the Summary of Benefits

Mr Beadle of Mercers advised the Committee that most of the material required for the Summary of Benefits had been obtained. Although this phase appeared simple on paper, Mr Beadle explained that to be valid, the summary should be complete in every detail. Some discussion was held on the content of the summary and it was understood that it would contain, not only information on the current programs but it would also highlight differences and include a commentary on these differences including their implications.

Mercer's target for completion of this summary was the end of the first week in February. Mr Beadle recommended that a meeting be held approximately one week following circulation of the Summary. This meeting, ideally a full day session would use the Summary as a basis for on open discussion between the Committee and William M. Mercer regarding a Concordia Benefits Committee. This recommendation was agreed to by the Committee and February 18th 1975 was chosen as the date for this meeting.

Open discussion between the Committee and William M. Mercer regarding a Concordia Benefits program

It was pointed out that this item would be fully covered at the February 18th meeting; any prior discussion without the Summary being prepared by Mercers would be impractical. The Committee agreed therefore to postpone this item until February 18th.

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Clarification of time constraints in program development

The Chairman asked William M. Mercer to comment on the deadlines outlined in C. Waters' memo of November 18th 1975 (Appendix "A"). Mr Beadle replied that the September 1st target date was realistic but that he would see the timing as follows:

- Phase 1

Detailed Summary of Benefits would be in the hands of the Committee by February 6th; a session using the summary as a basis of an open discussion would be held February 18th.

- Phase 2

Mercers would present a number of alternative proposals to the Committee in the latter part of March. These alternatives would be accompanied by cost figures within 5%. Another full day session would be held to discuss these.

- Phase 3

Mercers would present one final plan proposal complete with costs in the first week of May. This final plan, if agreed to by the Committee, would be in a form which could be presented bo the Board with all the information required for it to reach a decision.

This subject was dealt with at length. It was pointed out that the last Board meeting of the year was normally held in June. It would therefore be advisable to submit the proposal in May to allow the Board, if it so wished, to submit a proposal for further study to the Finance Committee or any other Committee deemed necessary.

Employee Input phase

Mr Beadle explained the method of "Climate Review" used by Mercers to gather employees' perceptions in benefits.

Briefly, the "Climate Review" consists of selecting a 5% sample from the employees. This 5% sampling is broken down into groups of at most 13 individuals. Criteria used in forming a group are: occupation, age, sex, marital status.

Meetings of these groups last generally from two to two and one half hours. The members of the groups are encouraged by a project leader to air their opinions on what they think, what they know, what they perceive as problems and what they would like to see. The sessions are recorded on tape which are subsequently translated.

The results of the sessions are written up as a report. The conclusions reached are placed on a zero to five scale based upon the degree of participation of the group.

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Mr Beadle remarked that inevitably the discussion creeps into other compensation matters. If substantial enough, these items would be reported.

The cost of the "Climate Review" including translation of the tapes amounts to between $1,500 and $1,800 per session.

Considerable discussion was held on this topic.

The reasons against holding these sessions were:

a) The participation in the Committee of five representatives duly elected by their peers.

b) The fact that these representatives were aware of the needs of their constituents.

The reasons in favour were:

a) That some members of the committee felt that their perception of their constituents needs may not necessarily coincide with the needs as conceived by their constituents.

b) That since Benefits costs formed such a large percentage of compensation. all possible effort should be made to ensure that the new program satisfies the needs and aspirations of most employees.

c) That the effort to elicit a wide input from employees would have a positive impact at the time the program was introduced.

Mr Tait asked what effect such a project would have on the timing. Mr Beadle replied that a final report would be ready before the end of March. The Phase 2 report would take into account the findings of the Climate Review. He therefore foresaw no delay in the time schedule.

Some discussion was held as to the inclusion of members of certified bargaining units in these sessions. It was pointed out that no clause regarding benefits existed in any of the collective agreements. The Committee felt that no problem existed in this area.

It was also agreed that due to different benefit programs, all participants in any one group session should be members of the same benefit program.

After further discussion the Committee agreed that:

a) The cost of the Climate Review be held to $12,000

b) That a maximum of eight groups be formed which would be most representative of the University Community

c) That the Secretary meet with William M. Mercer to work out the technical details.

The meeting closed at 2:20 p.m. on a motion from the Chair.

G. Martin - Secretary
CW/dg